A MONASTICISM FOR THOSE WITH NO RELIGION WITHIN THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

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It is called the great heart, the heart that is like the great mountain, like the great ocean, the heart that is not one-sided, not partisan. If he carries a 'ryō' *in his hand, he does not consider it light; if he lifts a '*kin'*, he does not think it heavy.*
Surrounded by the voices of spring, he does not amuse himself in spring ponds; though he sees the colors of autumn, he does not have an autumn heart. The competition of the four seasons is within a single scenario; he sees light and heavy at a glance. (Eihei Dōgen, Tenzo Kyokun)

At the beginning of the third millennium, the traditional monasticism of religions is in decline, new forms are advancing, and an increasing number of people are talking about internalized monasticism both in and outside religious circles.

The Contemplative Path has for years embodied one of those forms, the Way of the Monk, intended as an embodiment of the monk archetype: following an inner imperative that investigates relentlessly and leads to oneself, leading toward what is essential in life, for one's existential fulfillment.

What is essential?
– Knowledge.
– Awareness.
– Understanding.
– The overcoming of selfishness and being open up to love.
– The pursuit of inner unification:
** unification between the different constituent elements of the human being and the different levels of awareness and feeling that coexist in it.*
** unification between what constitutes our world and builds our relationships: mineral, plant, animal, human, superhuman.*
** unification that involved both the inner and the outer, the inner us as well as the other from us and the cosmos in general.*
The term monk has a double meaning: alone, united.
Alone as every human being faces with the responsibility of his own life.
United as "one who discovers the unity of the whole" and does so by living, by doing well, by making mistakes: by experiencing.
Not united by philosophical acquisition, but by direct experience.

This monk has no law to obey other than that which comes from his feeling and which is the source of the responsibility he feels toward all creatures.
This monk has no religion and, not having one, belongs to no one, serves no one, answers to no one: he knows the Being-that-it is as the constitutive aspect of his nature, as the first root, as the unified and total manifestation that happens at any time.
This monk has no traditional community to belong to and he is not bound by obligations, vows, promises made to his community and to his God.

This monk goes out into the world and creates the scenes of his life, reacts to impulses on the basis of the understood and the not understood, he is totally aware that everything that happens is interpretable in unitary terms by overcoming the limitation of dual and oppositive logics: in the world he learns not to see only the detail, but to link it to the whole; he learns to conjugate himself with other; he learns to contemplate the single fact and the marvelous harmony that celebrates the whole.

Everything speaks to this monk of the Absolute One, everything reveals it to him, everything encourages him to pursue a unified understanding of himself, his life, all humans beings and all lives.

This monk does not need to believe, it is the archetype of the monk that vibrates in him and questions him, that attracts him, that leads him, that corrects him, that inspires him, that infuses him with the fire of faith: he is the archetype that believes, and he believes because it is what it is.

This monk shuns all images and ideas of God: he feels the One Being, he experiences it in himself, therefore he does not need to think of it.

This monk lives in the cities of the world and among the mountains, in family, in community, in solitude, it does not matter: wherever he goes and whoever he is, whatever he does, he is aware that everything leads to Being and Becoming intended as an inseparable reality and he lets it pervade his behavior, body, mind and feelings.

This monk has no mission: Following the Feeling, the monk's archetype will lead him, time after time, to meet this or that, to help and to be helped, to cooperate and to retreat from cooperating.

Listening to the feeling within himself is the first great work of this monk who has no God to serve, nor to follow, as one follows someone who is other from himself: he listens, he discerns, he obeys what comes from his inner self, and then he acts.

He cares about the consequences of his actions in the world, he is aware that with each gesture a balance will be disturbed and then it will be restored on an another level: he is cell among cells, feeling among feelings, and along with others he learns and he understands.

The monk is aware that he pays the price for his mistakes and he takes responsibility for the suffering inflicted on others: he does not try to run away or hide, he faces his days in the lucid awareness that living is, endless, creating and destroying the balance in order to give to each person what is necessary for them to know, to become aware of, to understand.

He is willing to provide, to care, to manifest himself by facts: he does not delegate, he is never passive, he knows his personal existential function, and, when he does not discern it clearly, he investigates it.

The monk may gather in communities based on cohabitation or not, he may live in his own family, or in solitude.

His day, whether he lives in solitude, family or community, is cadenced by inner rhythms:

- Anchoring to being in meditation.
- The possibility to develop knowledge – awareness – understanding through relationship.
- The time of solitude and retreat so that the cycle of the day can internalize itself: everything was born from the root of Being and everything returns to the root of Being. Every day.

The archetype of the monk resonates in the inner of those who are ready and on its notes are activated, thus finding their own direction and sense of their personal existence.

Hermitage from silence,
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Translated with www.DeepL.com/Translator